DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 058 828 HE 002 752

AUTHOR Henderson, Algo; Gumas, Natalie
TITLE Educating for Service: Black Studies for Premeds.
INSTITUTION California Univ., Berkeley. Center for Research and Development in Higher Education.
PUB DATE 71
NOTE 3p.; article taken from Admitting Black Students to Medical and Dental Schools, Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, U. of Cal., Berkeley
AVAILABLE FROM Publication Division, Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, 2150 Shattuck Avenue, U. of Cal., Berkeley, California ($3.00)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *African American Studies; Ethnic Studies; Health Activities; *Higher Education; *Medical Students; *Social Responsibility

ABSTRACT

Traditional undergraduate liberal arts courses, required of most premedical and predental students, have failed dismally to motivate doctors and dentists to become concerned with the health problems of the poor, be they black or white. Examination of black studies programs leads the authors to believe that these programs, if planned with the purpose in view, would be a source of additional doctors and dentists with humanitarian and community-oriented values. (HS)

ED 058828

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

EDUCATING FOR SERVICE: Black Studies for Premeds

ALGO HENDERSON AND NATALIE GUMAS

Traditional undergraduate liberal arts courses, required of most premedical and predental students, have failed dismally to motivate doctors and dentists to become concerned with the health problems of the poor, be they black or white. Examination of black studies programs leads the authors to believe that these programs, if planned with the purpose in view, would be a source of additional doctors and dentists with humanitarian and community-oriented values.

The demand for black studies at many colleges and universities across the nation during the last few years has resulted in a new look at the needs and desires of black students and black communities. A survey of student protests in 232 colleges and universities, including seventeen black colleges, from January through June of 1969, reported that black students at black colleges most frequently demanded more student participation (59 percent), followed by the demand for more black courses (47 percent). In predominantly white colleges, the most frequently voiced demands of black students (61 percent) were for more black courses, and 48 percent wanted more black faculty (Urban Research Corporation, 1970). These issues are still the most salient ones for black students in white colleges and universities.

Advocates of black studies programs have argued that the educational experience in America is a *white* experience that turns the black person who passes through it into a middle class white person. Therefore, they have concluded, the experience is not relevant to the needs and aspirations of black people because it has contributed nothing to the black community. Black studies are promoted as a means of bolstering the ethnic pride and confidence of black students who have been denied these by a racist society (Wisdom & Shaw, 1969; Hare, 1969; Robinson, Foster, & Ogilvie, 1969).

Proponents of black studies also have suggested three goals that black studies could or should have (Hare, 1969; Robinson et al., 1969; Crouchett, 1970; Cleveland, 1969). The first is therapeutic, with the program seen as a means of changing a negative self-image to one reflecting the belief that "black is beautiful." The intellectual or academic goal would be to train black scholars who would teach or research the black experience. The political or pragmatic aim (the most controversial function) would be to provide skills to assist the black community in its "struggle for liberation" and in the development of "black nationalism."

This article is from a recently published Center report, *Admitting Black Students to Medical and Dental Schools* by Algo Henderson and Natalie Gumas. There are a limited number of copies of the report still available at $3.00 each from the Publication Division of the Center.

HE 004 752

Opponents of black studies have questioned the intellectual validity of studying the black experience and cautioned against politicizing the university (Kilson, 1969). Others hostile to the program have expounded the view that the only way for blacks to gain power and win their struggle is to know their enemy and that this can be done only by acquiring a more sophisticated knowledge of American society by studying subjects such as business practices and the communication media (Blassingame, 1969). Finally, some have argued that black studies courses should be taken by white students who need to know about the black experience but that blacks can solve some of the problems of their community only by acquiring skills in engineering, law, medicine, economics, and so forth (Lewis, 1969).

The pros and cons of black studies programs have been and are still being debated, and the programs and courses are still in flux. Many programs are plagued by financial and administrative difficulties, and the issues of the role of black students in running the programs and the exclusion of white students from courses are unresolved (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 1970). Despite these arguments and problems, black studies programs are becoming part of the curricula in many colleges and universities. New departments, courses, and centers or institutes are being planned and implemented at schools across the country. Black students (and white) are showing intense interest in these developments.

Black studies may have an additional goal to those just described, that is, to interest a larger number of black students with community-oriented values in entering the medical and dental professions. According to James M. Whittico, Jr., past president of the National Medical Association, the number of Negroes in white medical schools dropped between 1955 and 1962 when integration in education became official U.S. policy, and enrollments at Meharry and Howard are also declining (Priwer, 1969). There are also fewer black dentists relative to population in this country than before, and fewer black students are entering even Meharry or Howard dental schools (Applewhite, 1969).

Most black physicians and dentists in this country come from a middle or upper middle class background, as do their white colleagues, and reflect the same values as their white colleagues. Gaston Bouquett, a black physician whose patients are mostly poor and black, says that ". . . 75 percent of black physicians would rather not have anything to do with the ghettoes and the slum element" because " . . . historically they've taught black was bad and white was good [Vogl, 1969, p.111]."

Advocates of black studies have suggested that these courses will lead to the development of a positive self-image or self-perception. Research on the academic achievement and motivation of black students has found that a favorable self-perception and a positive concept of internal control

(defined as the belief by a person that his success is contingent upon his own behavior or skills) are determinants of academic performance (Coleman, 1966; Gurin, Lao, & Beattie, 1969; Epps, 1969). If, indeed black studies courses can result in a positive self-image, which is related to academic achievement, then it can be hypothesized that increasingly successful experiences in academic courses might encourage black students to widen their educational goals and aspirations by planning, for example, to continue their studies in graduate or professional school.

However, an examination of many proposals or rationales for the establishment of black studies programs reveals that few if any are professionally oriented. The possibility of using the courses to encourage or prepare black students for a profession other than teaching is rarely discussed although both proponents and opponents realize that the black studies curriculum "will have to find its ultimate justification in its ability to fulfill the occupational and social needs of Black America more than the psychological and nationalistic uses [Crouchett, 1970, p.33]."

The description of the content and structure of black studies programs as they exist today is based on two Center studies as well as on a questionnaire study by Cleveland (1969). Cleveland studied 193 randomly selected institutions of higher education. He reported that 32 percent offered courses "focusing on the Negro's accomplishments," and that black history, black literature, and interdisciplinary courses constituted the majority of the course offerings. The first Center study was conducted by the authors, who sent a letter to 60 colleges and foundations in May and June of 1969, asking for copies of the format and content of black or other ethnic studies programs and asking two questions about the use of ethnic studies programs as a preparation for professional school. The responses from this study served as a basis for a second Center study by Christensen, Ruyle, and Hurst. A fuller description of the two studies is discussed in the chapter on methodology in Henderson & Gumas (1971).

Data collected by Christensen et al., reveal that of the 2000 institutions offering some type of black studies, 38 percent offer random courses, 30 percent have programs with no degree, 16 percent have programs with a degree, 9 percent have departments, and 7 percent have established centers or institutes. Of the programs with degrees, 87 percent offer a B.A. and 13 percent an A.A. Titles of the programs fall mostly into three categories: random courses, 35 percent; Afro-American studies, 27 percent; and black studies, 29 percent.

An interesting finding is that black studies of some type, whether random courses or full degree programs, are most likely to be offered at institutions having the smallest enrollment of black students. That is, 75 percent of the black studies courses or programs are located in institutions reporting 10 percent or less of their student body as being black, while only 13.5 percent of the institutions offering some type of black studies have black student enrollments of from 76 percent to 100 percent. This is partly a reflection of the fact that *most* of the institutions in the sample have small black student populations.

The courses themselves are often interdisciplinary in character and many of them include some fieldwork and community activities. Crouchett's examination of 30 black studies programs reveals that:

> . . . seven courses consistently serve as a core: Afro-American History, Afro-American Literature, African History, Afro-American Sociology, Black Psychology, Black Theater and Drama, and African and Afro-American Art. The Afro-American History course is usually the heart of the program, and most often used as an introductory step into the program [Crouchett, 1970, p.34].

The behavioral sciences are well represented in many programs in courses such as Sociology of the Black Family, Economics of the Ghetto, Economics of Racism, Politics of the Black Community, or Psychology of Prejudice or variations. Many of these courses fit well within the realm of the liberal arts and behavioral science courses recommended for medical and dental school applicants.

A black studies program that encouraged students to plan a career in medicine or dentistry might consider offering courses which included fieldwork at hospitals and clinics; social science techniques and methodology to train the student to identify salient issues and problems in the minority community and interpret relevant statistical and demographic data; a study of ghetto institutions and organizations, such as the church, schools, social and economic groups, and medical facilities; and the cultural and artistic expressions of black people in literature, drama, art, music, and dance. These courses would be taken in addition to the science and math prerequisites required by all medical and dental schools.

The National Medical Association has recently established a foundation:

> . . . on the theory that no one knows the problems of delivering first-rate medical care to the poor better than the Negro physician in private practice. Its policy is to break the humiliating pattern of ghetto care by setting up comprehensive care facilities on the edge of the ghetto areas, in which both poor and affluent alike will be treated by private physicians on an equal basis [Priwer, 1969, p.28].

In order to succeed in its goals, many more black physicians and dentists are needed.

Students electing black stuides or other ethnic studies programs in college should be aware of the importance that medical and dental schools place on preparation in the natural sciences. Students must be prepared to choose the necessary courses in the sciences parallel to their courses in black studies.

Earlier we presented evidence that the professional schools are openminded about admitting students whose general education has been in black studies. This policy should be continued by the schools. Although black studies materials and curricula are still in the formative stage, they may yet

THE CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION
2150 SHATTUCK AVENUE
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94704

Nonprofit Org.
U. S. Postage
PAID
Berkeley, Calif.
Permit No. 1

offer advantages to the black student in building pride and confidence and in preparing him for a professional career. It should be borne in mind also that the traditional liberal arts program has fallen far short of producing the dedicated service-oriented professional. If black studies programs can encourage students to seek a medical or dental career, as well as develop a sense of ethnic pride and commitment to their community, the medical and dental professions as well as the poor will be the winners.

REFERENCES

Applewhite, H.L. The vanishing Negro dentist. *Quarterly of the National Dental Association,* 1969, *27*(3), 78-79.

Blassingame, J.W. Black studies: An intellectual crisis. *The American Scholar,* 1969, *38*(4), 548-561.

Cleveland, B. Black studies and higher education. *Phi Delta Kappan,* 1969, *51*(1), 44-46.

Coleman, J.S. et al. Equality of educational opportunity. U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966.

Crouchett, L.P. A development of black studies. Unpublished master's thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1970.

Epps, E.G. Correlates of academic achievement among northern and southern urban Negro students. *The Journal of Social Issues,* 1969, *25*(3), 55-70.

Gurin, G., Lao, R., & Beattie, M. Internal-external control in the motivational dynamics of Negro youth. *The Journal of Social Issues,* 1969, *25*(3), 29-53.

Hare, N. What should be the role of Afro-American education in the undergraduate curriculum? *Liberal Education*, 1969, *55*(1), 42-50.

Henderson, A.D. & Gumas, N.B. *Admitting black students to medical and dental schools.* Berkeley: Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, 1971.

Kilson, M. The intellectual validity of studying the black experience. In A.L. Robinson, et al. (Eds.), *Black studies in the university*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969. Pp.13-16.

Lewis, A.W. The road to the top is through higher education–not black studies. *The New York Times Magazine,* May 11, 1969.

Priwer, J. American medicine/A minority report. *St. Louis University Magazine,* 1969, *42*(3), 25-30.

Robinson, A.L., Foster, C.C., & Ogilvie, D.H. (Eds.) *Black studies in the university*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969.

Urban Research Corporation. *Student protests 1969: Summary*. Chicago: URC, 1970.

Vogl, A.J. Medical black power and the militant MDs. *Medical Economics,* March 31, 1969, *46*(7), 108-135.

Wisdom, P., & Shaw, K.A. Black challenge to higher education. *Educational Record,* 1969, *50*(4), 351-359.

☆ GPO 790-783

NEW FROM CRDHE

Evaluating University Teaching

Hildebrand, M., Wilson, R.C., and Dienst, E.R. $1.50

Another in the CRDHE Handbook Series, the study not only elicited valuable opinions about teaching from faculty and students, but produced reliable and easily administered instruments for assessing effective teaching.

The Research Reporter

Published quarterly by the Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, 2150 Shattuck Avenue, University of California, Berkeley, California 94704

LELAND L. MEDSKER, *Director*

K. PATRICIA CROSS, *Editor*
NORMAN T. RAE, *Managing Editor*

The purpose of *The Research Reporter* is to keep those who are concerned with the practice of higher education informed about the Center's on-going studies, the completion of research projects, and recent Center publications.

The Research Reporter will be sent without charge to those who ask to be placed on the mailing list.